



STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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January 15, 2002
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: Berger, Breckner, Christensen, Curry, Fox, Gieschen, Grone, Ham, Holcomb, Kolb (via phone), Jelinek, Lloyd, Nolan Brown, Rasmussen, Schultz, Shepard, Vavrina
Absent: Davis, Ortmeier, Smith, Sorensen, Steffes

I. *Public Comment* – There was no public comment.

II. *Approval of Agenda*

Fox added Website Information under Old Business to the agenda. A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Fox and seconded by Rasmussen. Motion passed.

III. *Approval of Minutes from November 20, 2001*

The minutes were amended to add Grone as absent at the last meeting; the current minutes did not have her listed. A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Fox and seconded by Ham. Motion passed.

IV. *Director's Report (Frank Lloyd)*

1) SRC Annual Report – Copies of the 2001 State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report were distributed to council members at the meeting. Thanks to the council's input, a new and improved report was created to provide information about the council and the success of the VR program in NE. The report will be distributed to legislators, State Board, all VR staff, etc. later this week. Several VR staff were involved in developing the report. The report emphasizes VR success stories from the past year, with data and statistics interspersed among the text. It will be available on the VR web site.

2) Transition program – VR is reviewing how transition services are provided across the state. Some VR offices provide services for students age 14-16 while other offices, because of time constraints, are only able to focus on students in their senior year. VR wants to focus efforts not just on students in their junior/senior year, but also work with students age 14-16. The intent of the transition program for VR is to work with students, schools and parents earlier in the process. The role of VR and the role of the schools needs to be defined so a statewide program that benefits students can be created. As VR develops ideas, they will be brought to the SRC for discussion.

3) Classification Study – The Department of Education recently conducted a classification study for all of the positions in the Department. There are currently 89 different position classifications in the Department and the qualifications and compensation are not consistent, so a consultant was hired to review the system for the Department. In the process, the consultants recommended that VR add a third position at the local level. VR currently has associates and specialists. The consultants feel the range of activities being done are so wide that a third position could be created. It has been recommended that the new position, Service Specialist, be a bachelor's degree level position. This person will provide direct services to clients, such as placement and evaluation. They will not be able to perform activities required by law to be done by an individual with a masters degree (determine eligibility, sign off/develop IPE, verify the suitability of the consumers employment). The consultants will be looking at all of the activities currently being done in service delivery and dividing those activities up into one of the three position classifications. The council will be provided additional information as it is developed.

4) Background Checks - Phase 3 of the background screening process, which involves background checks for clients, has been implemented. VR will not be doing routine checks on clients. If client wants to work in an area which may require background checks by an employer, VR will discuss this with them. If the clients feels they might not pass the background check, the specialist will work with the consumer to determine if the work goal is appropriate. If the client isn't sure what is on their background check, and wants VR to do one, they will. This puts the responsibility on the client, rather than on VR. This completes all three phases of the background screening for VR including staff, providers, and clients.

5) Application for Services – VR recently changed their application form to include what clients can expect from VR. To improve as an organization, VR feels it is important to let clients know up front what they can expect from VR, and that VR hold themselves accountable for meeting those expectations. If VR is not meeting the expectations, they need to look at revising their processes. Since the council has a responsibility to monitor consumer satisfaction, this will be an area they might want to be involved in.

6) External Web Site – VR is currently in the process of changing their external web site. Sarah Clements, one of the data programmers with VR is redesigning the web site. Sarah has had considerable experience in developing and maintaining effective web sites.

7) Social Security Reimbursement System – VR has been trying to find a way to automate the social security reimbursement system so reimbursements can be transmitted electronically. No one in the country is currently doing this. VR's data people recently met by conference call with the data people at Social Security to find out the possibilities of this working.

8) Supervisory/Management Training – The Department of Education offered free supervisory training to all Department staff. It required a commitment of 80 contact hours, and most people in the Department were not able to make the time commitment. All VR office directors and some other state office staff are participating in the training. The training is reported to be excellent.

9) Employment 2003 – SRC members received a copy of the recommendations made to the Mental Health Planning and Evaluation Council from their sub Committee on Employment. The intent is to get all people involved in employment services for people with mental illness to work together and coordinate systems to improve these services.

V. Old Business

A. Annual Report

This was discussed under the Director's report.

B. IPE Discussion (*Don Crouch*)

Several people have been working towards the development of a new system for writing the IPE. Currently staff members work with consumers to help them develop their plan, and then the plan is entered into the computer system. VR wants to create a more consumer friendly system that encourages consumers to develop their own plans with our assistance. A draft proposal has been distributed to the VR administrative group for review. More information will be brought to the council when it is available.

C. Website (*Alvin Fox*)

There is a web site at www.ssa.gov/work with information about Ticket to Work.

VI. Reports

A. Committee Reports

Interagency/Annual Report (Shepard, Chair)– Jack reported that the committee would like to look at referral sources and see if they are any patterns between individuals rehabilitated successful and where they are referred from. The committee will be developing a survey for referral sources through conference calls. Eileen volunteered to draft the survey questions and have someone with experience look at the questions to see if they are appropriate.

Client Service/Satisfaction (Jelinek, Chair) – Dave reported the committee is obtaining statistics on whether people are following through and applying for services after orientation. Don is going to query QUEST from the time consumers are entered into information and referral until a decision has been made to apply or be closed. The committee will report back at the next meeting regarding the reasons people decided not to apply. Committee members started putting a client satisfaction survey into draft, which they will send out for review and test in support groups Breckner is involved in. The next step will be presenting the survey to the Council.

Strategic Issues (Schultz, Chair) – Mark reported that the committee is going to focus issues that can have an impact on employment services to persons with disabilities. The committee identified major areas that each of the committee members are going to summarize and write an impact statement on. These will be discussed during a conference call and brought back to the council at the next meeting. The issues identified are ticket to work, the freedom initiative, workforce development act, the demographics of the state (aging of population and shift in demographics between rural and urban areas), and rural svcs delivery areas.

B. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report was distributed prior to meeting.

Joint Agency Meetings (JAM's) - Vicki may not continue coordinating the JAM's in the future. Agencies involved are reevaluating whether the meetings are still needed. They may discuss other ways to get information from the unserved and underserved. The JAM's have become a PR event and the agencies are not getting new issues. It was suggested that the agencies instead follow up on the information they have gathered from the JAM's held over the last few years.

C. SILC Report (*Tim Kolb*)

Three council members just returned from attending the SILC Congress in San Diego. The SILC is currently looking for new members to serve on the council. They are trying to ensure statewide representation and making an effort to get someone from the minority population. The Annual Resource Committee will be visiting underserved areas of the state to try and build a grassroots effort for the purpose of raising the necessary funding to start a new center for independent living. Legislatively, the SILC is supporting the Medicaid buy-in bill and the NE with Disabilities Act.

D. ATP Report (*Mark Schultz*)

ATP continues to work with the one stop centers on the development of resource centers at the one stops. They still don't have MOU's signed from Department of Labor.

VII. New Business

A. State Plan and Policy Issues (*Don Crouch*)

VR invited Jon Rathjen, Office Director at the Lincoln office to provide information to the council regarding one of the VR committees. Jon is chairperson of the committee working on defining the Associates role within the agency. VR currently has two positions in their field offices, associates and specialists. These will eventually be expanded into three positions.

Jon reported that the associate role has been expanded over the last few years since VR has moved toward the team approach. In the past, the associates mostly did dictation, typing, data entry, etc. Through the team approach, these positions are doing more work directly with the consumer. They are actually providing services to consumers where before they were just documenting that services were provided.

The committee was created because more consistency was needed in defining what is expected of the associates. Each team has some flexibility in determining other associate responsibilities, depending upon their needs and the needs of their area. Monitoring has been identified by the committee as the main role of the associate. Monitoring (case management) used to be done by specialists. It involves tracking what is going on with individual consumers to ensure things are moving ahead and staying on schedule. If monitoring identifies that services are being delayed, the team would work together to determine why and identify next steps. Having the associates do the monitoring would free up some of the specialists time and make them more available for counseling activities.

The committee is preparing a recommendation to present to VR's Administrative Staff in February.

B. Assessment/Testing (*Janet Drudik*)

Janet will be invited to the next SRC meeting to discuss assessment/testing.

C. Committee Roles

Council members discussed what committees are needed to accomplish council business. Discussion about the current committee structure included the following:

Client Satisfaction Committee - Expanding the Client Satisfaction committee into three different committees looking at agency planning, current service delivery, and client satisfaction.

Legislative Committee - It was suggested that the legislative committee be eliminated since SRC is not in a position to lobby. The Council's purpose is to be of assistance to the VR agency and not to be involved in disability issues unless they relate to employment. Legislative issues that come up will be brought to the council by council members and could be addressed at that time by a committee, but the council does not need an entire committee to be focused on legislative issues.

Interagency/Outreach Committee – This committee needs to continue looking at other organizations/agencies that refer to VR and the quality of the relationship these agencies have with VR.

Other issues that need to be given to a committee - Annual Report; internal processes; Ticket to Work

A motion was made by Nolan Brown and seconded by Shepard that the following committee structure replace the committee structure currently in place:

1. Strategic Issues Committee –includes legislative initiatives, Ticket to Work
2. Client Services/Satisfaction
3. Interagency/Annual Report – includes Workforce Development
4. Executive – duties remain the same

Motion passed unanimously.

If more time is needed for committee work, committees should meet by teleconference or outside of the scheduled SRC meeting dates.

Council members present at the meeting volunteered to serve on one of the new committees.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Vavrina and Curry at 2:30 p.m.

Agenda Items for next meeting:

- ◆ Assessment – Janet Drudik